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# *News Release*

## **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency**

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### **APPLICATIONS INCREASE FOR DARPA GRAND CHALLENGE 2005 AS DEADLINE APPROACHES**

#### **New Teams, Website Discussion Forum Signal Emergence of a Growing Robotics Community**

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) reports receiving a surge in applications from teams wanting to participate in DARPA Grand Challenge 2005 as the February 11, 2005, filing deadline approaches.

Teams interested in participating in DARPA Grand Challenge 2005 have three weeks remaining in which to submit their applications. The first of several deadlines—submission of the first two parts of a five-part application—is 5:00PM EST, February 11, 2005, and requires basic team information and certifications of funding and support.

A second critical deadline occurs exactly one month later. On March 11, 2005, teams must provide DARPA a vehicle specification sheet, video demonstration of the vehicle in action, and signed agreement pertaining to potential site visits of teams and their vehicles by DARPA personnel.

DARPA Grand Challenge Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz explains, "DARPA received a significant number of new applications over the past 2 weeks and, to date, we've received 125 applications for Grand Challenge 2005. This is 19 more applications than received for the first Grand Challenge event held in March 2004, and we expect to receive more in the remaining 3 weeks before the application period closes."

Kurjanowicz said the teams represent 30 states and 3 foreign countries, adding, "We welcome back 34 teams that participated in the first event and are pleased to see that nearly 3 times that number—89—are new teams. As a result of the DARPA Grand Challenge, the number and diversity of innovators working on autonomous vehicle technology are growing. From what I see and hear, all these innovators are excited about building a robotic vehicle that could not only capture the prize, but someday save the lives of our men and women on the battlefield."

(more)

The DARPA Grand Challenge 2005 website discussion forum (at [www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge](http://www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge)) has helped the community of innovators share ideas about autonomous vehicle capabilities, said Kurjanowicz. “Already, hundreds of participants have registered nearly 3,000 comments on the forum. The most popular topics for discussion relate to obstacle detection, which is a tough technical problem to solve.”

The DARPA Grand Challenge is a field test of autonomous ground vehicles over rugged desert-type terrain for the purpose of advancing robotics technology that will assist and save the lives of U.S. armed forces on the battlefield. At the first Grand Challenge, in March 2004, 15 vehicles operating solely on robotics technology attempted to navigate a 142-mile route through the Mojave Desert. None of the vehicles were able to complete the route, and DARPA decided to host another Grand Challenge event.

DARPA has doubled the prize offered for successful completion of DARPA Grand Challenge 2005; \$2 million will be awarded to the team whose autonomous vehicle successfully completes the route the fastest within a 10-hour period.

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*DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The Agency manages basic and applied research and development projects for DoD and pursues research in technology areas where the risk and payoff are both very high and where success may provide dramatic advances for traditional military roles and missions.*